BRITISH COLUMBIA

BC STATS Infoline

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highlights

a weekly digest of recently released British Columbia statistics

Prices

- **British Columbia's year-over-year inflation rate jumped half a percentage point to 2.4% in October.** The increase in the all-items consumer price index (CPI) was partly due to the effect of higher energy prices (+20.7%), but also reflected upward movement in the cost of other goods and services. Excluding energy, BC's inflation rate would have been 1.1% in October, up from 0.6% in the previous month. Most goods and services cost consumers more this October than they did a year earlier. The only exception was food prices, which remained below 1999 levels, as they have since the beginning of the year. The average shopping cart full of groceries cost BC consumers 1.6% less than in October 1999.

  BC's shelter index continued to climb, increasing 2.8% on the strength of higher prices for owned (+1.1%) and rented (+0.5%) accommodation and a 14.3% jump in the cost of water, fuel and electricity, which was primarily due to higher fuel prices. A 6.2% increase in the transportation index was also influenced by energy prices, which have pushed the cost of operating a vehicle up 12.1% from a year earlier. Prices for other goods and services purchased by consumers rose more moderately, at rates ranging from 1.5% for alcoholic beverages and tobacco to 2.2% for health and personal care products.

  Source: Statistics Canada

- **Canada's inflation rate was 2.8% in October, as prices continued to rise in all parts of the country.** Yukon (+1.9%) and NWT (+1.3%) were the only regions where the year-over-year inflation rate was below two percent. In the rest of the country, the inflation rate ranged from a low of 2.2% in Manitoba to 4.5% in PEI. Victoria's inflation rate was 2.1%; in Vancouver, prices were up 2.9%. *Source: Statistics Canada*

The Economy

- **Exports of BC products dipped slightly (-0.3%, seasonally adjusted) between August and September.** The drop in the value of exports was due to a downturn in overseas shipments (-2.1%), combined with relatively modest growth (+0.6%) in the value of goods exported to the United States. Exports of forest products to all destinations rose 3.2%, reflecting gains in both US (+4.7%) and overseas (+1.3%) markets. Mineral product exports were also up (+9.6%) in September. At the same time, shipments of agriculture and fish products slipped back 12.2%, while exports of other goods were down 7.0%.

  US-bound exports have been on an upturn since the beginning of the year, but suffered a setback late in the summer from which they have not yet fully recovered. Exports to other countries have been sluggish during most of the year, despite spiking in May and August. *Source: BC STATS*

- **During the first nine months of the year, exports of BC products were up 12.4% from the same period in 1999.** The improvement was partly due to forest sector exports (+6.8%), but was also fuelled by very strong growth in international shipments of energy products (+48.3%). Sales of electricity (+273.6%) and natural gas (+26.9%) rose substantially, more than offsetting the effect of a 3.5% drop in international shipments of coal. At the same time, exports of consumer (+17.3%) and industrial (+16.2%) goods advanced, as did shipments of

Report **Occupations of recent immigrants to BC**

Did you know...
Bicycle thefts represented 5% of all thefts in 1999. There were 8,600 bikes reported stolen in BC last year. That's down from 15,000 in 1990.

machinery and equipment (+12.2%). However, automotive product exports (-17.6%) were well below last year's level.

Ontario (+6.4%) was the only province where exports grew less than in BC. Alberta's 57.4% increase, which was the strongest in the country, was only partly due to soaring oil and gas prices. Excluding energy products, Alberta's exports were still 33.6% higher than in the first nine months of last year. Other oil and gas producing provinces such as Newfoundland (+42.0%) and Saskatchewan (+31.2%) have also received a boost from the energy sector. In the rest of the country, increases ranged from 19.6% in Quebec to 27.7% in PEI. Total Canadian exports were up 16.3%.

Source: Statistics Canada

- **Retail sales in the province edged up (+0.3%, seasonally adjusted) between August and September.** This was slightly less than the national average of 0.4%. Retailers in most parts of the country saw little change in their sales in September. Alberta (+1.1%) and Ontario (+0.6%) were the only provinces where sales increased significantly. They were down in Newfoundland (-0.7%), Saskatchewan (-0.6%) and Manitoba (-0.4%). *Source: Statistics Canada*

- **Sales by BC retailers remained well above 1999 levels in the third quarter.** They were up 6.4% overall as most types of retailers saw their figures improve over the third quarter of 1999. Drug stores (+11.1%) posted the biggest gain, followed closely by retailers of automotive products (+10.5%). Furniture (+6.7%), clothing (+5.0%) and food (+4.5%) retailers registered more modest gains. *Source: Statistics Canada*

- **Wholesale sales in BC were down 0.8% (seasonally adjusted) between August and September.** Sales had been flat in the previous two months, but have been trending down during most of the last year. Sales were off in every province except Newfoundland (+0.3%), declining 0.9% at the national level. Six of the 11 trade groups reported declines. *Source: Statistics Canada*

- **The number of British Columbians receiving regular employment insurance (EI) benefits fell 13.2%, to 38,250, during the twelve-month period ending in September.** Nationally, the number of EI recipients dropped 9.5% to 335,420. *Source: Statistics Canada*

Agriculture

- **Cash receipts from farming operations in British Columbia totalled $447 million during the third quarter, an increase of 1.7% over the same period of 1999.** Both crop (+2.2%) and livestock (+2.3%) receipts rose, but subsidies and other payments to producers fell 24.0%. Among crop producers, increased receipts from sales of vegetables (+12.4%), floriculture and nursery products (+11.1%) and potatoes (+7.6%) helped offset declining revenues from most other products. Producers of cattle (+12.1%), turkeys (+11.6%) and eggs (+5.2%) fared better than other livestock farmers. Canadian farm receipts were up 6.0%. *Source: Statistics Canada*

Income Inequality

- **In 1998, the 20% of BC families with the highest incomes received an average of $5.10 in after-tax income for every $1.00 received by families in the lowest income quintile.** Canada's income inequality ratio was 5.40. Among the provinces, PEI (where the ratio was 4.20) had the smallest after-tax income gap, while Alberta's inequality ratio (6.10) was the biggest in the country. *Source: SC, Catalogue 75-001-XIE*

Part-time workers

- **Last year, one in five Canadian workers spent less than 30 hours per week at their main job.** Three-quarters of them did so by choice. Young men aged 15–24 (18%) and women under 55 (62%) made up 80% of the voluntary part-time workforce, but just 43% of the full-time workforce. Nine out of ten young people who were voluntarily employed part-time did so because they were going to school. Among 25-to-54-year-olds, women were most likely to cite preference (45%) and family responsibilities (44%) as reasons for choosing part-time employment. Preference (44%) and going to school (26%) were the most common reasons given by men. Only 6% of women who chose to work part-time were attending school. *Source: SC, Catalogue 75-001-XIE*

For data originating from Statistics Canada: data sourced to 'Statistics Canada' has been retrieved from CANSIM, the agency's electronic database; otherwise the source is identified as 'SC' plus the publication name or catalogue number.

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Infoline Report: Occupations of recent immigrants to British Columbia

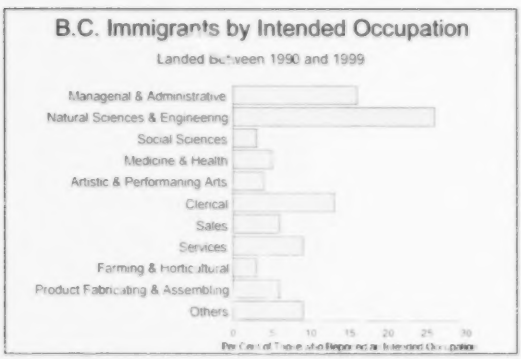
Contact: Frank Ip / (250) 387-0336

Originally published in the Second Quarter 2000 issue, *Immigration Highlights*. Annual subscription: $30 + GST

Immigrants have always been one of the important sources of skilled workers to Canada. "Brain Gain" through immigration is believed to have been making up for some of the "Brain Drain" resulting from skilled Canadians moving to work in other countries . . .

To make up short skilled labour supply through immigration has always been one of the major themes in Canada's immigration policy. While it is generally believed that on an ongoing basis Canada has been losing its highly skilled workers to other countries, particularly the United States, statistics show that a certain degree of this "brain drain" has been compensated by the arrival of skilled immigrants. However, precise information is not readily available to allow for an accurate analysis of this brain drain/brain gain situation at the provincial level.

Intended occupation as reported by an immigrant at the time of landing can be used as an indication of the immigrant's occupation prior to immigrating to Canada, and the occupation he/she is likely to seek after initial settlement in Canada. Figures collected from the federal immigration program show that during the period 1990-1999, approximately 77% of the 409,000 B.C. immigrants did not report an intended occupation. These immigrants were likely to be children, accompanying spouses or parents, and immigrants in the Retired Class or Family Class where occupation background was not a factor for admission.



Of the 93,000 immigrants landed in B.C. over the ten year period who stated an intended occupation, one in four were in the natural sciences and engineering occupations which mainly include systems/computer analysts and engineers. A high proportion (16%) was in managerial and administrative occupations. Approximately 9 per cent were in some kind of service occupation.

Table 1 below shows the number of B.C. landed immigrants by selected intended occupations reported by immigrants at time of landing. As can be seen from Table 1, there has been a significant number of trained professionals in various fields come to settle in the province. However, due to many possible factors such as job availability, credential/qualification recognition, and personal circumstances, a certain number of these skilled immigrants might have changed to an occupation different from the one they originally intended.

BC Immigrants by Selected Intended Occupation (Landed between 1990 and 1999)

Secretaries & Stenographic and Typing Operators	6,465
System Analysts & Computer Programmers	4,482
Other Occupations	3,917
Management & Administration	3,619
Accountants, Auditors & Other Financial Officers	2,310
Chefs and Cooks	1,916
Farming, Horticultural & Animal Husbandry	1,914
Electrical Engineer	1,762
Personal Services	1,589
Civil Engineer	1,342
Mechanical Engineer	1,259
Nurses	1,039
Industrial, Farm & Construction Mechanics	939
Tailors & Dressmakers	700
Elementary & Kindergarten Teachers	549
Physiotherapists	508
Sewing Machine Operators	496
Physicians & Surgeons	492
Social Workers	484
Dental Hygienists	356
Pharmacists	262
Dentists	70

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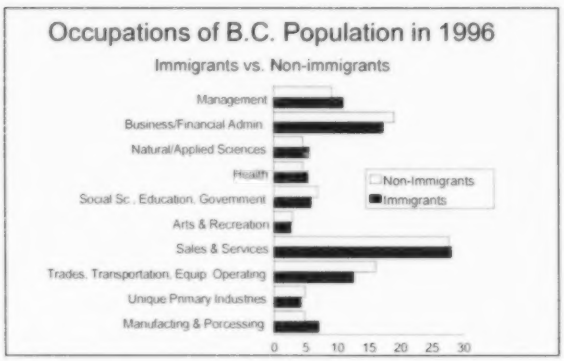
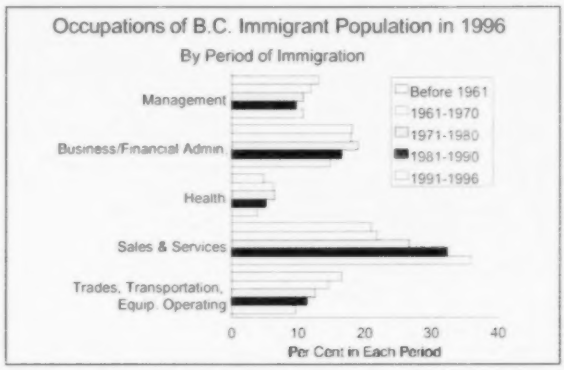
Census shows recent immigrants were more likely to work in a sales or service job than those who came earlier . . .

While no data are currently available for studying the immigrants' shift in occupation before and after landing, census information can be used to shed some light on the actual occupation of immigrants after they landed. Data from the 1996 Census indicates that there were a total of 1,960,660 British Columbians in the labour force, and about 26 per cent (or 507,160 persons) were immigrants. Of the immigrant population who reported an applicable occupation, a majority (28%) was engaged in service and sales occupations. Compared to their non-immigrants counter-parts, immigrants were less represented in occupations related to construction trades, transportation, and operation of heavy equipment. Also, a relatively higher proportion of the immigrant population were in the managerial occupations.



Further analysis on occupations of the immigrant population in B.C. reflects that recent immigrants were more likely than established immigrants to be engaged in occupations related to sales and services, and less likely in the field of health/business administration, and education/social sciences. More than one in every three working immigrants who arrived between 1991-1996 were working in a sales or service related job. Only one in every five immigrants landed before 1970 were engaged in similar jobs in 1996.



While domestic job opportunities are believed to be one of the most important factors affecting an immigrant's choice of occupation, many other elements have also been identified as factors affecting an immigrant's career path in Canada. These elements may include considerations such as how Canada's immigration policy is formulated for the immigrant selection process, whether opportunities are readily available for an immigrant to upgrade their skills in Canada, and whether foreign qualifications/credentials are recognized by Canadian employers.

Also, it is important to note that a majority of immigrants did not report an intended occupation at time of landing due to the non-requirement for immigrants who were admitted under certain categories or who were accompanying family members. Many of these immigrants would have participated in the labour force after landing. Available data show that many immigrants who did not report an occupation intention are also highly educated when arriving in Canada. However, their contribution to the skill pool in the domestic labour market cannot be quantified readily due to the lack of relevant information. The federal government is currently conducting longitudinal studies on the immigrant population in order to better understand many settlement and performance issues about recent immigrants. Until further information becomes available, it is impossible to accurately determine where the country's position is on the longer term "brain drain vs. brain gain" equation.

Infoline

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BC at a glance . . .

POPULATION (thousands)	Jul 1/00	% change on one year ago
BC	4,063.8	0.9
Canada	30,750.1	0.8
GDP and INCOME		% change on
(BC - at market prices)	1999	one year ago
Gross Domestic Product (GDP) *($ millions)*	118,783	4.2
GDP *($ 1992 millions)*	104,323	2.1
GDP *($ 1992 per Capita)*	25,899	1.3
Personal Disposable Income *($ 1992 per Capita)*	16,700	0.0
TRADE ($ millions)		
Manufacturing Shipments (seas. adj.) Sep	3,124	-3.0
Merchandise Exports (raw) Sep	2,783	9.7
Retail Sales (seasonally adjusted) Sep	3,016	5.7
CONSUMER PRICE INDEX		% change on
(all items - 1992=100)	Oct '00	one year ago
BC	114.5	2.4
Canada	114.6	2.8
LABOUR FORCE (thousands)		% change on
(seasonally adjusted)	Oct '00	one year ago
Labour Force - BC	2,123	2.8
Employed - BC	1,960	2.9
Unemployed - BC	163	1.8
		Oct '99
Unemployment Rate - BC *(percent)*	7.7	7.7
Unemployment Rate - Canada *(percent)*	6.9	7.1
INTEREST RATES (percent)	Nov 22/00	Nov 24/99
Prime Business Rate	7.50	6.25
Conventional Mortgages - 1 year	7.90	7.35
- 5 year	8.25	8.25
US/CANADA EXCHANGE RATE	Nov 22/00	Nov 24/99
(avg. noon spot rate) Cdn $	1.5476	1.4687
US $ *(reciprocal of the closing rate)*	0.6468	0.6820
AVERAGE WEEKLY WAGE RATE		% change on
(industrial aggregate - dollars)	Oct '00	one year ago
BC	647.97	2.5
Canada	622.58	3.6

SOURCES:

Population, Gross Domestic Product, Trade, Prices, Labour Force, Wage Rate } Statistics Canada

Interest Rates, Exchange Rates: Bank of Canada Weekly Financial Statistics

For latest Weekly Financial Statistics see www.bank-banque-canada.ca/english/wfsgen.htm

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- Earnings and Employment Trends—Article
- Consumer Price Index

Next week

- Business Indicators, November 2000
- Current Statistics, November 2000

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